

Message Text

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PAGE 01 OTTAWA 01425 220020Z
ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 EB-08 L-03 DOE-15 SOE-02 DOEE-00
AID-05 CEA-01 CIAE-00 COME-00 DODE-00 H-01 INR-10
INT-05 NSAE-00 OMB-01 PM-05 OES-07 SP-02 SS-15
STR-07 TRSE-00 ACDA-12 NSCE-00 SSO-00 USIE-00
INRE-00 /112 W

-----076924 220025Z /70

O 220014Z MAR 78
FM AMEMBASSY OTTAWA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6747
INFO AMCONSUL MONTREAL
ALL OTHER CONGENS IN CANADA BY POUCH

C O N F I D E N T I A L OTTAWA 01425

DEPARTMENT FOR EUR/CAN; EB AND L/EB

PASS DOE FOR LES GOLDMAN AND ASST. SECRETARY BERGOLD;
DOE/FERC FOR COMMISSIONER SMITH AND JOHN ADGER

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: ENGR, PGOV, SENV, CA
SUBJECT: NORTHERN GAS PIPELINE LEGISLATION DEVELOPMENTS

1. BILL C-25 IS NOW SCHEDULED FOR THIRD READING (FINAL
PASSAGE) WEDNESDAY, MARCH 22 PROVIDED ELEVEN AMENDMENTS
INTRODUCED TODAY BY NDP CAN BE DEALT WITH. IF NOT, FINAL
PASSAGE WILL COME AFTER PARLIAMENT RETURNS FROM EASTER
RECESS APRIL 3. SPECIAL SENATE COMMITTEE IS HEARING
TESTIMONY TODAY (MARCH 21) FROM DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER ALAN
MACEACHEN, FOOTHILLS PIPE LINES (YUKON) LTD. PRESIDENT
ROBERT BLAIR, AND COUNCIL OF YUKON INDIANS. SENATE HEAR-
INGS HAVE BEEN COMPRESSED AND SYNCHRONIZED WITH HOUSE
ACTIONS ON BILL AS PART OF SERIES OF UNUSUAL STEPS BY
GOVERNMENT TO SPEED IT THROUGH PARLIAMENT AND ROYAL ASSENT
BEFORE EASTER RECESS.

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2. THIS MORNING'S (MARCH 21) GLOBE AND MAIL REPORTS THAT
NATIONAL ENERGY BOARD (NEB) MEMBER W.A. "BILL" SCOTLAND
WILL BE APPOINTED TO SERVE AS "DESIGNATED OFFICER" WHO
WILL EXERCISE NEB POWERS FOR PIPELINE MONITORING AGENCY
WHEN LEGISLATION IS PASSED. SCOTLAND WAS MEMBER OF NEB
NORTHERN GAS PIPELINE PANEL WHICH DRAFTED BOARD'S JULY 4,

1977, REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS ON PIPELINE. ASSOCIATE VICE CHAIRMAN GEOFF EDGE WOULD NOT "CONFIRM" NEWS REPORT BUT TOLD ECONOMIC OFFICER THAT SCOTLAND'S APPOINTMENT "HAS HIGH PROBABILITY."

3. COMMENT: CONVERSATION WITH PIPELINE COMMISSIONER BASIL ROBINSON INDICATES THAT GOVERNMENT APPARENTLY WANTS TO RETURN APRIL 3 ONLY LONG ENOUGH TO CALL ELECTION WHICH, ACCOUNTING FOR 60 DAY INTERVAL AFTER DISSOLUTION OF PARLIAMENT, WOULD TAKE PLACE IN EARLY JUNE. ACCORDING TO ROBINSON, LONG LIST OF AMENDMENTS (WHICH WILL NOT PASS) INTRODUCED BY NDP AT REPORT STAGE IS IN PART RESULT OF PROCEDURAL PROBLEM PARTY FACED IN COMMITTEE. NDP DID NOT HAVE SECONDING VOTE IN COMMITTEE AND COULD NOT MUSTER MINIMUM SUPPORT EVEN TO INTRODUCE AMENDMENTS. IT THEREFORE HELD AMENDMENTS UNTIL BILL WENT TO FLOOR OF HOUSE WHERE NDP SECONDING VOTES ARE NO PROBLEM. MORE IMPORTANT, HOWEVER, IS OBVIOUS LINK TO NDP'S PRE-ELECTION STRATEGY. PARTY'S EFFORTS TO DELAY BILL'S PASSAGE UNTIL SOMETIME AFTER EASTER SEEM TO INDICATE DESIRE TO HOLD OFF ELECTION UNTIL LATE JUNE AND TO GO ON RECORD BEFORE ELECTION WITH STATEMENT OF STRONG OBJECTIONS TO BILL, PARTICULARLY ITS CANADIAN CONTENT PROVISIONS.

4. EXTENT TO WHICH NDP WILL PURSUE THESE TACTICS DEPENDS ON HOW WILLING PARTY IS TO RUN IN ELECTION FACING CHARGE
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FROM LIBERALS AND CONSERVATIVES THAT IT DELIBERATELY ATTEMPTED TO SABOTAGE A PROJECT CLEARLY IN NATIONAL INTEREST. ENDERS

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